

The World of Foreign Books

French Books.

Surveyed by A. G. H. SPIERS.

ROMAIN DORGELES' "Saint Magloire" is advertised as "the best book of peace by the author of the best book of the war." This is high praise; yet, when all allowances have been made for the overstatements of a publisher, it does not appear to be wholly undeserved. Any one who to-day looks below the surface of French letters sees signs of change; he notes that since 1914 certain old preoccupations are taking on an unwanted importance and that in a few striking cases young writers are looking on the world with new eyes.

Each of Dorgeles's two last books contains qualities which set it apart from the common run of works of the same period. "Les Croix de Bois" is an excellent collection of war stories, marked by two features that distinguish it from most collections on the same subject: having a better perspective, it is marked by a greater emphasis upon what is of general appeal to the average reader; and, though it does not avoid the pathetic and tragic, it contains a large measure of red blooded merriment. Since its publication in 1919, when it won the Femina prize, it has become justly popular, selling at present its 130th thousand. To-day Dorgeles's new volume stands out, like its predecessor, from other books appearing with it; this is the most characteristically post-war book I have read. The striking feature of "Saint Magloire" is its impersonality. Dorgeles thus presents the spectacle, most unusual in our day, of a young writer who looks on our contemporary society without passion, others may storm or lament; others have been disappointed in their hopes or confirmed in their fears.

Dorgeles seems to be devoid of anger, hope or fear. Indeed, he carries his impersonality and his passiveness still further: the realists of an older school, while priding themselves on not intruding their own views into their works, insisted, at least, that their method of work, their scientific notation of reality, should be obvious. Dorgeles, on the contrary, takes evident liberties with real life; his hero is a semi-symbolic figure; his events are a queer mixture of the life sized and the grandiose, in which cause and effect are but dimly sketched, not proved.

His story, however, proceeds as though driven entirely from within—the unhurried, uncheckable logic of a chemical experiment. In the midst of the civilization of our day the author sets down the most inoffensive, the gentlest force of good. He takes pains to eliminate every conceivable element of disturbance that does not belong strictly to the essence of the force or of this civilization. On the one hand, his hero not merely preaches Christian charity in its simplest form, he also mingles with it an Eastern heresy on the transmigration of souls, calculated to appease all sense of jealousy between men. On the other hand, it cannot be said that our civilization either is provocative of trouble, for Dorgeles depicts no evil character or scheming group of characters sufficiently powerful to incite a conflict. Yet a conflict develops immediately. In the short space of a few months, Magloire, whose love of man could and does produce miracles, develops about him, in his own family, in the small town where he lives and in Paris hatred, misery and death. "Since their saint has come to preach kindness," says the Mayor, "men have detested one another as never before." This result, as given dispassionately by Dorgeles, seems fatal and inevitable. So foreign is Christian charity to the organization and spirit of our present day civilization that this civilization, if charity be allowed to work upon it, must break asunder, bubble and disintegrate with untold suffering.

The Distinguishing Spirit.

One of the preoccupations of former years to which the war naturally gave new emphasis was that of human suffering, its meaning and its necessity. This is the subject of Edouard Estienne's new book, "L'Appel de la Route." This same book reflects in another way also the spirit that distinguishes to-day from yesterday; it questions seriously the capacity of the mind to solve without error the riddles of life. In a passage well suited to shock the traditional Frenchman (and which, as it happens, has aroused the impatience of a certain critic) the author writes: "Have you not noticed that the clearer ideas are the less likely they are to be correct?" I cannot say that I was much struck with Estienne's handling of the philosophic idea which was his subject, but I am quite willing to pardon him for shortcomings on that score out of gratitude for the most entertaining manner in which he develops a good story full of incident. Three men who have once been close friends are by chance involved in a discussion.

To prove his point each man adduces concrete examples drawn from the experiences of persons whom he himself has known. Now it so happens that each of the three is presenting a different aspect of one and the same drama. Consequently, keenly interested from the beginning, the reader, like the speakers themselves, must wait until the last man has told his story to learn the end of the tale and see how the author keeps his promise to "show the justification of suffering which you call an injustice and which is perhaps

nothing more nor less than the most effective spring of life."

Life and the Crowd.

When in 1920 Romain Rolland brought out his "Clerambault" he supplied (in the form of a loving book!) an excellent example of the way in which certain points of view, created in the Old World before 1914, have come to have a new importance in the New World after 1918. For some thirty years or more the French had been interested in the psychology of crowds. This study, originally launched by the studies of such men as Gabriel Tarde and Gustave Le Bon, appealed not only to professional psychologists but also to a wider audience. Writers began to see in it a new point of view from which to portray life, the most signal efforts in this line being those of Jules Romains. During the war the importance of this crowd psychology was brought home to every one as never before. "Formerly," reflects Clerambault, "a man ran the danger of life imprisonment if he took the liberty of thinking differently from his sovereign—and the danger of being burned at the stake if he thought differently from the church. Nowadays he is obliged to think like forty millions of people" (the population of France)—"and if he refuses he runs the danger of being dishonored or shot down."

For some time now this crowd psychology has been knocking to enter into the work of Georges Duhamel, as is evident to any one familiar with his "Entretiens dans le Tumulte." It has succeeded in getting into his last volume of stories, "Les Hommes Abandonnes." Luckily, however, Duhamel's own particular inspiration has not abandoned him—that sympathy with man, that understanding of his heart, which made the beauty of the admirable "La Vie des Martyrs and Civilisation." As a result of this sympathy the principle of crowd psychology has lost much of its stiffness and we still find in this collection of tales the real persons we admired in the former collections.

WILLIAM DANA ORCUTT'S

absorbing romance of today
THE BALANCE

"Mr. Orcutt does more than tell a good story well. He deals with a big industrial problem in intelligent and constructive fashion without detracting from the story interest." — *Boston Herald*. \$1.90

STOKES, Publisher

THE

MODERN CITY AND ITS GOVERNMENT

By William Parr Capes

"Invaluable to city officials and to everyone . . . who wants to see the community so organized and managed as to produce more comfort, better health and better surroundings and conditions." — *Boston Herald*.

\$1.50. At any book store.

E. P. Dutton & Co., 681 5th Ave., N. Y.

Easter Books

Fine Editions of English Poets, Devotional Books, Bibles and Prayer Books

DUTTON'S

681 Fifth Avenue
Opposite St. Thomas's Church

THE

MOON ROCK

By Arthur J. Rees

Author of "The Shrieking Pit." Mystery — weird and baffling, surrounding a murder committed under strange circumstances, leaving no tangible clues. \$2.00.

DODD, MEAD & CO., Publishers, New York

HIS DOG

By ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

A dog story with a genuine thrill in it, by the author of "Lad and Bruce"

\$1.50. At any bookstore.

E. P. Dutton & Co., 681 5th Ave., N. Y.

THE SENSATION OF 1922 A Son of Sahara

THE GREATEST OF ALL DESERT NOVELS

By LOUISE GERARD

that gives you the real thrill of the Sahara with its

Wild Bedouins

Its Slave Markets

The Luxuries of a Sultan's Harem

The Capture of a White Woman

Her Rescue

And the big Smashing Finish!

\$1.75 NET

The Macaulay Company New York

Au Revoir Boxes of BOOKS, etc.

For Travellers by Steamer or Train
\$5 \$10 \$15 up

DUTTON'S

681 Fifth Ave., opp. St. Thomas's

For Women Readers in the Current Magazines

W. L. GEORGE discusses "Platonic Love" (*Harper's Bazar*), and asks the usual question, Is it possible for a man and a woman to conduct an emotional friendship and keep the sex element out? As there are no Platonists to-day we are incapable of platonic love. The prevalent type was invented by woman. For at heart a man has no great faith in it except as a *hors-d'œuvre*—with hope.

Henry T. Finck writes of "Gardening as a Sport" (*Harper's Bazar*), which he considers the most exhilarating and absorbing sport there is. The writer tells how you can become a disciple and rival of Luther Burbank, foremost of horticultural sportsmen.

Maria Jeritz, the brilliant new star of the Metropolitan Opera, is the subject of an enthusiastic article by Mary F. Watkins (*Harper's Bazar*).

What Five Leading Newspapers Say of

AN ORDEAL of HONOR

By Anthony Pryde

Philadelphia North American "Hearts are touched in this book, the best that has come from Anthony Pryde's pen, and decidedly one of the notable novels of the year."

New York Tribune "It's conversation is admirable. . . Mr. Pryde has compounded an excellent novel out of the elements of love and mystery."

Philadelphia Public Ledger "It has a staying quality which means that it will be just as good reading a quarter of a century hence as it is today. Add today it is a satisfying and entertaining literary meal."

Boston Transcript "Startlingly vivid it is a brilliant piece of work quite unique of its kind, and strongly recommended to those who want their pulse beats quickened."

New York Herald "In this novel Anthony Pryde has surpassed even 'Marquetry's' Duel,' the first and best of his books up to this."

Four privileges in six weeks. \$2.
Robert M. McBride & Co. Publishers, N. Y.

This Viennese singer, with her golden voice, is one of those rare creatures—the exponent of beauty of talent and of art.

George Ade, America's first aid to cheerfulness, gives some sound advice in his article "I'm Cured" (*Hearst's International*). He shows what worry and spiritual distemper do to the body, and, referring to Christian Science, admits that "there must be something in it." The old country doctor who knew nothing of Freud or modern science healed his patients, nine times out of ten, by a cheerful philosophy. The new teaching does not mean that we shall stop striving or sit around all day grinning like Cheshire cats, but that we are expected to handle the facts of our existence instead of letting them handle us. "Worry is the conjuring up of possibilities that never come to pass. . . . The prophet of evil is just as dangerous as the peddler of opium. . . . Before you lock up at night leave your imaginary woes out into the darkness."

Frank Crane also touches upon fear and its malicious influence in his article "Waste! Heroism" (*Woman's World*). Many sacrifices are quite useless, as well as much that is called heroism. Ask yourself: "What is worth while? Examine all apparent duties by the light of the greater issues of life. Let health and love and to-morrow have their say. There's many a nonsensical duty we take up which we would never have considered if we had looked at it from the larger, higher point of view."

Zona Gale, who lives in Portage, Wis., a little town of 3,000 people, writes of "My Little-Town Dream" (*People's Popular Monthly*), in which every member is awake to the spirit of cooperation. A little town is full of possibilities, like a home, and it has an enormous advantage over a city, since the little town's spirit is almost visible.

In "Reminiscences" (*Cosmopolitan*) Lillian Russell tells how it feels to be a star. Her first engagement was under T. Henry French, and the opening vehicle "La Cigale." With this production theater tickets were raised from \$1.50 to \$2. Miss Russell received 15 per cent. of everything that was sold in the theater, and in addition she had a guaranty of \$1,500 a week. Mme. Bernhardt attended the second performance of "La Cigale," and Miss

Russell tells a story in that connection. She also relates how she was presented to the Prince of Wales, later King Edward; of the celebrities she met at the World's Fair, and of how she helped to raise the salary of Marie Dressler from \$10 a week to \$100.

"Accepting the Universe," by Ethel Puffer Howes (*The Atlantic Monthly*), is advertised as "Women Accept the Universe." Women still lack opportunities and incentives for the highest achievements, and the basic inhibition still operating to suppress the powers of women is the persistent vicious alternative, marriage or career—full personal life versus the way of achievement. The writer quotes President M. Carey Thomas as saying that society cannot expect to benefit from the genius and ability of women as a sex until all women are permitted by public opinion and social sanction to marry and go on with their job instead of being found fault with and sometimes deprived of the job itself. The question of children is discussed, and here is where the real conflict comes in, for, says the writer, "there is no mental or moral understudy for mother love." Of the two hundred or so Careers for Women listed all but two or three would be unavailable for mothers.

William S. Sadler, M. D., writes of "College Women and Race Suicide" in the same issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal*. His question is "Does higher education unfit them for marriage and motherhood?" He feels that mothercraft should be taught in season and out of season in our educational system. A young woman does not have to choose between marriage and career, because in a large number of cases she can have both. Another important question: from what levels of society are we recruiting the race? Who are the parents of the next generation? Many statistics are given which prove that the marriage and birth rates are low among college women.

William Lyon Phelps's subject this month (*The Ladies' Home Journal*) is his "Human Nature in the Bible" series, is "David—Shepherd, Poet, Soldier, Statesman. Prof. Phelps pictures David as an epitome of manhood, with the virtues and vices that often accompany virility. David's first exploit was when he destroyed 'the Philistine heavy-weight champion, Goliath.'"